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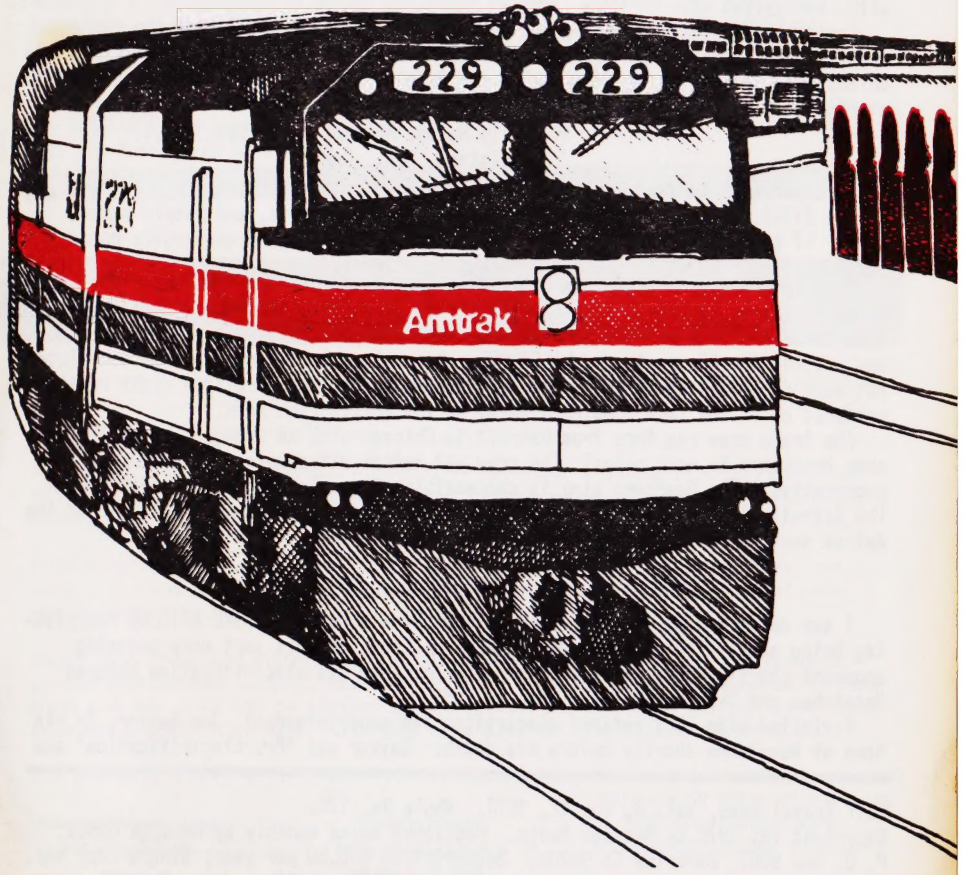
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

NO. 12 - 1978

ISSUE NO. 178



LETTERS

As a railroad trainman, I found Mr. Klopp's letter (issue #176) derogatory toward wage earners and impractical in his suggestion as to crew utilization on Amtrak trains. To my knowledge no railroad employee has so cushy a job that a single switching move or coupling of train lines constitutes "several hours' pay" --no supervisor of ordinary intelligence would allow it! In my experience, most of the people I work with exhibit a pride in doing a job well and efficiently even if they do not always hold their employer in high esteem.

Mr. Klopp's suggestion that crews run a train from start to finish is ludicrous. Enginemen, trainmen and conductors are employed to operate a train safely over a given stretch of track. They must be familiar with the location of sidings, stations, gradients and signals. In my experience, Canada's 11-hour "hog law" is just about the limit of time an individual can maintain alertness and civility. Many Amtrak train journeys encompass two days or more! Pay incentives for on-time performance would fairly have to be paid to dispatchers, station agents, and sectionmen who are just as vital as on-board crew to keeping the trains on time. "Raising a little hell" down the line just doesn't work--people must be reasoned with, not yelled at.

Certainly I think such things as crew changes, methods of pay and the number of on-board employees can be negotiated between Amtrak and the railroads and labor unions just so long as we are treated as reasonable people rather than the lazy, avaricious numbskulls some people like to portray us as.

Philip Mason, Member, Local 501, U.T.U.
Revelstoke, B.C., Canada

My experience on timekeeping differs from that noted in Mr. Klopp's letter (issue #176). Trains are often late, planes are often late, and people expect this. If arrival is within a half-hour or so of schedule, no one really cares, particularly if an explanation or apology is offered.

Case in point is a trip from Detroit to Chicago on the SAINT CLAIR on Aug 10. We were delayed shortly after leaving Detroit by a truck blocking a crossing, ran slow to Kalamazoo due to track work, and were delayed again west of Porter, Indiana waiting for the eastbound LAKESHORE. We arrived in Chicago over an hour late, but each delay was explained and no one seemed upset. (The railfan might have wondered about the last 20-minute delay on the multi-track main.)

The train crew ran thru from Detroit to Chicago with no change. Has there been some breakthru in work rules? The crew and Amtrak attendants were competent and cooperative. The Dearborn stop is successful; 41 people boarded the SAINT CLAIR. The Detroit station has been nicely refurbished and is no longer a "pit". And the Amtrak section from Kalamazoo to Porter is fast, smooth single track.

David Glenn
Cincinnati, Ohio

I was concerned to read your recent news item about an EMPIRE BUILDER run risking being stalled in the Cascade Tunnel. Problems of this sort were becoming apparent shortly after Great Northern discontinued its electrification between Wenatchee and Skykomish, Washington in 1956.

I visited with GN's retired electrification superintendent, Joe Gaynor, in his home at Wenatchee shortly before his death. Gaynor was "Mr. Electrification" and one of the best servants GN ever employed. Never did he criticize the decision to convert to diesel.

Gaynor did relate to me personally, however, problems GN faced: (1) GN never received the expected salvage value of the electric plant and equipment.

(2) Diesel locomotives never developed expected horsepower ratings in the Cascade Tunnel, almost always running at 90% of rating or less.

(3) Many diesel types ran perilously hot in the tunnel, often at 200° F or more, causing continuous concern among operating personnel.

We can only hope that BN will resume provision of ventilating fan service for Amtrak trains, and that the Cascade Tunnel route eventually will be re-electrified.

Glenn Lee
Seattle, Washington

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THE COVER STORY

The California Dept. of Transportation in a Sep 13 announcement endorsed a proposal to reroute the COAST STARLIGHT via Sacramento, Marysville and Chico, using Western Pacific tracks for the Sacramento-Marysville portion. Caltrans said this would add over a million people to the train's market area and could result in a 45% increase in annual passenger volume. Caltrans said the change would take at least 6 months to implement and would cost between $700,000 and $1,250,000 in track and signal work. Caltrans published a feasibility study of this proposed change in August, and our cover illustration is taken from part of the cover of that document. It shows a drawing by artist Rich Tolmach of a future STARLIGHT, equipped with bi-level cars, including "Sightseer" lounge, pulling into the Marysville CA station.

READY FOR IMMEDIATE MAILING - - VOL. IV - - 1978 - 1979

Railway Passenger Car Annual

At long last we have finished compiling Volume 4 of the RAILWAY PASSENGER CAR ANNUAL. Our printer has been co-operative and we have the book in stock ready for immediate mailing.

As in past issues this valuable compilation contains a listing in numerical order of all Railroad, Operating Authority, and Transit passenger cars in active service during 1978 showing prior owners, names and numbers, builder and year built.

Besides showing disposition of all cars retired in the past couple of years, we have a special feature in this volume showing the complete disposition of over 400 Amtrak cars sold since the energy crises in 1974.

Note: The amount of material to be included in the Private Owner and Museum section has become so great that this will have to be covered in a separate Volume from now on. You will be advised of this volume and the price as soon as we can schedule a publication date. Our goal is to have this out before Christmas 1978.

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RAIL CANADA

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by Robert Rynerson

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The night of July 28 the royal party flew from Newfoundland to Regina nonstop. From there the rail travel began. The Queen was accompanied by Prince Philip, Transport Minister Otto Lang, and Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney. The royal train traveled on CN from Regina to Melville and back, on the freight-only Qu'Appelle branch. Equipment for the train was deadheaded from Eastern Canada.

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It is also nice to know that complaints about the condition of stations on that line have finally been acknowledged by CN, even if there are no passengers around to appreciate the improvement.

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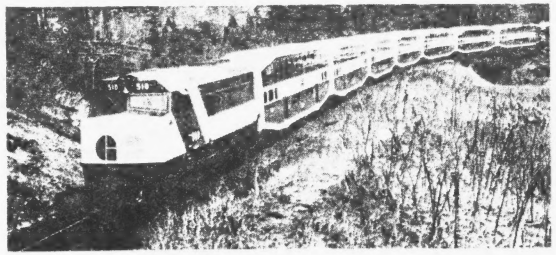

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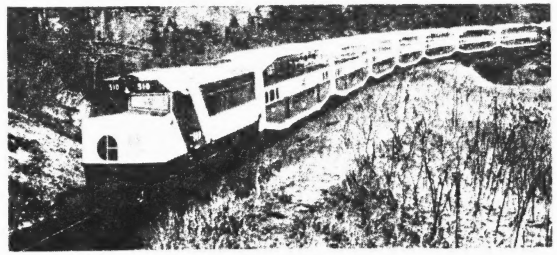

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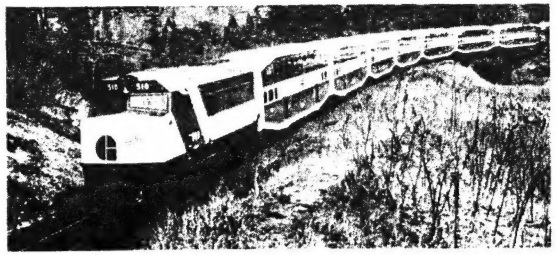

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would come down. But people warmed up about it and we decided it was cheaper to renovate than fight. It will never come down now." The old waiting room apparently is doomed, as a new waiting room is being built.

VIA RAIL CANADA is seeking approval for transcontinental train routings this fall that differ from those originally approved by the CTC. Instead of consolidating the Montreal and Toronto sections of the transcon routes in Sudbury, VIA wants to do it in Winnipeg. The Montreal train would run over a combination of CP and CN lines thru Ottawa, North Bay and Capreol to Winnipeg, while the Toronto section would run to Winnipeg thru Sudbury and Thunder Bay. West of Winnipeg the two transcon routes would be followed as at present. A tri-weekly train in Northern Ontario and a Capreol-Sudbury bus connection would then be unnecessary.

CANADIAN PASSENGER TRAFFIC in the first half of 1977 increased overall 10%, with some segments much higher than that, including 30% in the Maritimes and 15% on transcontinental routes. ONR's NORTHLANDER day trains are proving immensely popular, with 57,000 new passengers attracted between Jun 1977 and Jun 1978.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

NINETY LRV CARS are currently in service on Boston's MBTA and there is a chance that the remaining 40 may not be accepted. Another 40, on the property, have been cannibalized for parts. Fifty PCC cars are in a rebuild program,and 50 more will be rebuilt if the balance of the LRV order is rejected. Transit riding in Boston has been up an average of 6% each month of 1978 over the comparable 1977 month, and 1977 ridership was 5% higher than in 1976.

AN IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM on BART's Westinghouse motors will get underway, as a Federal grant of $14.7 million for the purpose was announced Sep 20. Some communications system improvements will also be made. BART said that failure of motors was its biggest cause of train breakdowns.

SEATTLE'S TROLLEY BUS system will get $600,000 in DOT funds for a shuttle service between Broad and Washington Streets.

CITY OF DETROIT wants to build a downtown rail commuter station as part of a large parking structure now planned. The station would bring Amtrak trains into the city center. The new buildings would be connected with a people mover. The rail station would have six tracks on two levels.

AUTOMOBILES WERE BANNED from the central business district of Boston starting Sep 5 as part of a federally-financed plan to relieve congestion.

PORTLAND, OREGON AREA officials on Aug 30 announced plans for a new mass transit system on the East Side using German-built light rail vehicles.

MEXICO CITY'S SUBWAY on Sep 11 began segregating cars by sex on one of its lines during rush hours to protect women from overcrowding and from handling by men.

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN RR strike on Sep 5 took Chicago commuters by surprise. After a 9-hour walkout, the railroad was back in operation.

MIAMI, FLORIDA GETS a $24.9 million grant from UMTA to help buy land for its proposed rapid rail transit system. The announcement came Aug 16.

WASHINGTON'S METRO SYSTEM on Sep 25 will extend hours of operation until about midnight, and Saturday service will be initiated, from 8am until midnight.

SUBWAY-BUS EXPRESS service from Brooklyn and Manhattan to J.F.K. Airport is being inaugurated Sep 24 by New York and New Jersey transit officials.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY in Chicago decided on Sep 11 to re-evaluate the proposed Franklin Street subway. And some Chicago architects are seeking to have Loop L declared a federal landmark, thus tying up grants for the subway. The RTA has been considering the possible purchase of Chicago's Union Station.

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS said on Aug 17 that he favors a 100-mile Metrorail system for Washington DC.

AMTRAK'S EQUIPMENT PLANS FOR EASTERN TRAINS

Amtrak plans to rebuild conventional cars into head-end power stock to re-equip the LAKE SHORE LIMITED and the BROADWAY LIMITED. At its Aug 30 Board meeting approval was given to proceed with the conversion of 136 cars from steam operation to electric heating and air conditioning. In addition, the Amtrak Board directed management to "proceed with a request for funds in fiscal year 1980 to buy new low level, long distance cars or to convert to head-end power sufficient cars for at least two Florida trains." The action authorized management to employ personnel and acquire material at its Beech Grove IN shops to convert the cars at the rate of three per week. LAKE SHORE conversion work has already been budgeted for $11.9 million, and the BROADWAY cars are estimated to cost roughly $9 million to upgrade. If Congress approves the capital expenditure for new cars for the Florida trains, about 150 would be ordered. If not, 162 cars would be converted to head-end electric power for these trains. Amtrak would hire about 200 more people at Beech Grove to do the work.

RTN has learned that Amtrak has divided its fleet of conventional cars into two categories, an "A" list and a "B" list. The A list contains about 700 cars--sleepers, coaches, diners, lounges, domes and baggage cars--most of them built by Budd, and all of them of stainless steel construction. The B list has about 400 cars, most of them built by Pullman Standard, which contain carbon steel instead of stainless steel. Many are badly rusted and weakened and not worth rebuilding. Amtrak plans to scrap the worst of these and to store the rest as a serviceable emergency fleet. The "A" cars will be converted.

The following cars are now at Beech Grove for rebuilding: diners 8050-8055, coaches 4560-4582, lounges 3401-3410, and slumbercoaches 2000-2006. Also several 10/6 sleepers and four baggage dorms are there. All will be renumbered.

Amtrak said that the re-equipping of the LAKE SHORE should occur in mid-1979.

ICC SUMMARIZES THE AMTRAK CUTBACK HEARINGS

The Interstate Commerce Commission said in early September that 2300 persons had testified at the hearings this summer on the DOT plan to cut back Amtrak. Another 2100 persons filed statements with the ICC. Most of those testifying favored retaining the threatened Amtrak service, according to an ICC spokesman. Those who were critical of rail service were primarily representatives of the bus companies and of some taxpayers groups who opposed spending federal money on Amtrak. The ICC's report to the DOT on the hearings is due by Sep 30.

AMTRAK PLANS MICKEY MOUSE PROMOTION

The fiftieth birthday of Mickey Mouse occurs in November, and Amtrak has planned a promotion in conjunction with it, with prizes for eligible California residents. First prize is a round trip for a family of four from L.A. to Chicago, traveling with the Walt Disney cartoon character, and an expense-paid weekend in Chicago. There are 50 second prizes of family invitations to a Mickey Mouse birthday party at Disneyland on Nov 18, and 1000 third prizes of Amtrak travel bags. Entrants must be at least 12 years old as of Aug 15, 1978. Entries are made by filling out coupons printed in newspapers or by sending name, address and zip code on a plain 3"x5" sheet of paper with the words "Travel with Mickey" to: Amtrak's Travel with Mickey Sweepstakes, PO Box 9128, Blair, Nebraska 68009. They must be received by Oct 16. (Newspaper coupons also ask for the date of birth of the entrant.) Multiple entries are permitted, but must be mailed separately. Amtrak or railroad employees who receive reduced fares are not eligible, nor are their families.

WHY ADVERTISE AMTRAK?

The INTER-AMERICAN route is always among the first routes considered for discontinuance whenever any reduction of the Amtrak system is threatened. Amtrak has repeatedly pointed to this route's low ridership as justification--or as an excuse--for various service curtailments. Altho Amtrak management is apparently oblivious to the concept of cause and effect, RTN readers should already be well aware of the many constantly recurring problems which have effectively masked this route's great potential during more than four years of haphazard operation.

One of the most significant of the route's numerous deficiencies has been the lack of advertising--particularly in light of repeated adverse publicity concerning air conditioning failures, MoPac's poor on-time performance, etc. Amtrak's token advertising campaign for this route is indefensible and inexcusable. The

by Bill Pollard and Jerry Barstow

What happens when a group of rail supporters begin to purchase advertising space to promote their favorite Amtrak train--a lesson to be learned here?

INTER-AMERICAN has been advertised in Arkansas only three times from 1974 to the present time, and the total advertising effort covered less than ten days. No on-line advertising had been provided this train since November, 1976.

The recent DOT route study, which eliminated the INTER-AMERICAN in all five proposed scenarios, acted as a catalyst to speed the formation of the Arkansas Association of Railroad Passengers. In order to help counteract the several years of neglect by Amtrak's so-called marketing department, Ark ARP initiated an independent advertising campaign to promote the INTER-AMERICAN in Arkansas and Texas. The program utilized newspaper advertising exclusively because of budget limitations, and covered Little Rock, Texarkana, and Longview. The advertisement sizes ranged from 1 column inch to 8 column inches. Total expenditures approached $200 per month for June, July and August. The $200 for each month was pro-rated to each of the three stations according to the expense of newspaper advertising.

The results of this relatively small amount of advertising greatly exceeded our expectations, as shown in the table below comparing 1977 and 1978 revenues.

		1977	1978	% increase
TEXARKANA	June	$1,700	$5,200	306
	July	4,700	9,000	192
LONGVIEW	June	2,000	6,100	305
	July	5,000	8,400	168

Texarkana advertising included one ad each Sunday during June and July, while Longview advertising included a total of 6 Sunday ads for these two months.

Little Rock presented a particular challenge, since that station had been subjected to extremely inconvenient station hours. (In Nov 1977 station hours were reduced to 11pm-7am; hours were improved slightly in Mar 1978, to a 6pm-3am shift. In May 1978 a day shift was added, allowing daytime staffing on Wed-Thur-Fri.) As a direct result of the reduction in station hours, Little Rock revenues fell from about $20,000 in Aug 1977 to barely $2,000 in Feb 1978. Thanks to the return of daily service and daytime ticket office hours, and also a strong promotion of the Kellogg's Kiddie Fare by Ark ARP, Little Rock revenues were able to climb to almost $17,000 by July 1978.

Ark ARP's advertising experience would seem to provide positive proof that small expenditures for advertising by Amtrak at the local level would have a significant impact on revenues. Many passenger train advocates in the South and West have suspected that Amtrak's marketing department has a terminal case of "corridor vision". This diagnosis is apparently accurate, since no additional advertising in this area has been forthcoming.

In light of the very modest expenditures by Ark ARP and the dramatic results achieved to date, we will not accept the argument that Amtrak just doesn't have enough funds to advertise locally at every station. Ark ARP proposes that Amtrak institute a realistic advertising program which would benefit all stations and effectvely advertise Amtrak to the public. We suggest that 1 to 1.5% of a station's gross revenues be set aside for local newspaper and/or radio advertising. By using a flat percentage of gross revenue, the smaller stations would obviously receive fewer advertising dollars. In these areas, however, the advertising costs are much lower, and equivalent coverage can be obtained at less expense.

The local station agent would be the logical person to institute local advertising, because of his familiarity with his particular area. By using radio copy and newspaper ads developed by Amtrak and made available to agents thru their sales representatives, local agents could and would become totally involved in selling their product. Station participation would probably astound even the most pessimistic of Amtrak's marketing people.

The accounting methods for this proposed system should not pose a problem. Ad expenditures could be handled just as miscellaneous station expenses are now handled. We believe that the results of a comprehensive local advertising program might well surprise Amtrak's home office.

Examples of ads placed in Little Rock papers by Ark ARP.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"...(it) is wrong (to state) that planes and buses are sufficient alternatives for those who can't, shouldn't, or don't want to drive. Plane travel is costly, threatening to peace of mind and doesn't begin to cover the smaller towns and cities that once were reached by trains and could be again. As for bus travel--the agony and abomination is in direct proportion to the distance."

--Foster Gunnison Jr. in letter to Wall Street Journal, Sep 11.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The California Department of Transportation has endorsed a proposal to reroute a portion of Amtrak's daily "Coast Starlight" through the eastern portion of the Sacramento Valley north of Sacramento..."

--Caltrans press release, Sep 13.

(Probably the portion without the diner and lounge.)

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE NIAGARA RAINBOW, Amtrak's NY-Detroit train, will be discontinued west of Buffalo on Oct 1, since the state of Michigan decided to stop its portion of the funding when the contract with Amtrak expires at the end of September. Amtrak said that the train will continue running on its current schedule between New York City and Buffalo, and service will be extended to Niagara Falls on Oct 29 as planned. Presently both Michigan and New York pay for one-fourth of the train's operating deficits on the Buffalo-Detroit section. This arrangement has been in effect since Oct 31, 1974. The projected cost in fiscal year 1979 was $562,000 for each of the states.....

AN AIRPLANE CRASH-LANDED on the tracks ahead of the southbound COAST STARLIGHT in Oregon's Cascade Mountains the night of Aug 29, delaying the train an hour while the light plane was removed. The pilot, who had taken off from Eugene, was not injured, and the tracks were undamaged. And the southbound STARLIGHT was delayed 1½ hours about noon on Aug 4 south of Salinas when it struck a pickup truck at an unguarded private road crossing. The truck driver was reported injured.....

* * *

AUTO-TRAIN CORPORATION in late August closed its agreement with the Mexican government and private investors for startup of an "Auto-Tren de Mexico" service between Laredo and Mexico City. Service is expected to start next April, with Auto-Train delivering $4.6 million worth of rail equipment to the Mexican operators in Jan and Feb. The agreement was signed in Mexico Aug 24. The new arrangement may improve the fortunes of Auto-Train, which has been running in the red since the end of 1976 and recently had to delay a payment of about $800,000 to SCL because of a cash shortage..... NEW YORK STATE will study the possibility of adding Batavia as a stop on Amtrak's Empire Service route, tho Amtrak or state funds are not currently available for capital improvements needed. Rail supporters are mobilizing residents of the area to contact their elected officials and the state DOT to push for the proposed stop..... NEW YORK STATE has a rail passenger association not included in our list of such associations that appeared in the two Dec 1977 issues of RTN: the NY Association of RR Passengers is at PO Box 1345, Gloversville NY 12078..... AMTRAK'S PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL was seen arriving in Seattle on Sep 3 with 9 cars, 6 of them being domes! Cars were 5665, 9479, 9471, 9455, 8153, 9451, 9467, 8045, and 9476. They were pulled by F40 engine 227 followed by steam generator car 472. There's been a shortage of Amfleet cars in the Pacific Northwest in recent weeks, especially since the NATIONAL LIMITED was Amfleeted, and conventional cars have been used on the train frequently. The SAN JOAQUIN is currently using an Amcafe and one 81-seat Amcoach.....

* * *

THE NEW JERSEY Dept. of Transportation plans to buy 374 miles of trackage from Conrail and Amtrak for a liquidation price of $17.5 million. The lines include former E-L, Jersey Central, North Jersey Coast and Penn-Reading Seashore Lines.....

A NEW MOUTHWASH called "Signal" and manufactured by Lever Bros. is being promoted by a "Get the Signal" sweepstakes. There are 30 first prizes of 21-day Amtrak USA Rail Passes plus $200 spending money. (Second prizes are highway emergency kits and third are railroad lanterns).....

AMTRAK'S NEW ELECTRIC locomotives are expected to start arriving in Dec 1979, and reportedly they will be designated the AEM7..... AMTRAK'S OPERATIONS VP Marty Garelich underwent open-heart surgery this summer and is now better than ever. A physical exam revealed his heart problems, and now Garelich is said to be demanding that everyone under him take their routine physicals without delay...

AMTRAK'S BI-LEVEL "SUPERLINER" cars are now expected to be ready to go into service on the EMPIRE BUILDER in January, with first cars being accepted by Amtrak probably in November. The first BUILDER trainset is expected to include a diner and sleeper(s) but no Sightseer lounges, which were ordered later. An unconfirmed report has it that Amtrak wants to try out the new cars on the NORTH STAR when they start arriving, with possibly also some test runs on the SHAWNEE...

FALL SCHEDULE CHANGES, according to unconfirmed reports, may include the addition of about 4½ hours of padding the the EMPIRE BUILDER and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA schedules to allow for equipment problems and cold weather. The extra time would be added between Whitefish MT and Minneapolis. Eastbound departure from Seattle would be around 4pm, and westward departures from Chicago would be earlier.....

THE HOGTRAIN'S COMIN'! Hog-Train Inc. of 8615 Chicot Rd, Little Rock 72209 is running a football train to the Arkansas vs. Baylor game on Nov 10, using 3 Amtrak coaches and a lounge-bar. The train leaves Little Rock at 11:49pm and arrives in McGregor TX at 10:54am Saturday morning. Information is available from the designers of the clever logo reproduced below.....

AMTRAK IS BUZZING with rumors of the coming big shakeup, which hasn't occurred yet but is expected quite possibly at the next Amtrak Board meeting on Sep 27. Several Amtrak executives are expected to get their walking papers at that time.....

NEW AMTRAK PRESIDENT Boyd has been maintaining a low profile so far. We understand he has decided to grant no interviews to the press until he has had several months to learn just what is happening inside the corporation. The expected shakeup mentioned above would be one result of his learning what's going on..... MILWAUKEE ROAD RECEIVED Stanley Hillman, according to industry sources, wants to eliminate thru use of the Milwaukee main line in the Pacific Northwest soon, with cars from sidings and branches turned over to UP or BN for delivery to Omaha or Minneapolis. Energy sources reported that Northern Tier pipeline Co, which hopes to ship Alaska oil from a proposed oilport at Port Angeles WA to the Midwest, has shown an interest in buying the Milwaukee main line right-of-way. Tracks would be removed to allow burying of an oil pipeline..... BEECH GROVE MODERNIZATION program has reached the halfway mark. On Aug 30 Amtrak's Board of Directors approved another $5.9 million to finish the "third and largest stage" of the 5-stage modernization program on the maintenance facility..... THE BLACK HAWK, train 371, was annulled at Rockford IL the night of Sep 11, and passengers were bused to points west because of a freight derailment on ICG at Freeport. The next morning passengers were bused from points west to Rockford, where they boarded train 370 for Chicago. Since the train could not be turned there, it was pulled backwards into Chicago by an ICG Geep.....

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, train 17, derailed at St. Paul's Midway Station on Aug 27, apparently a minor derailment. It delayed the eastbound NORTH STAR, train 10, which was delayed further when F40PHR engine 230 had problems at Oconomowoc WI. Milwaukee Road GP38 engine 358 was added at Milwaukee to help it along.....

THE COLFAX STOP on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR run became a permanent stop on Sep 1. It was inaugurated Oct 31, 1976, and in 1977 3207 people used it, Amtrak said. Other stations becoming permanent stops recently are Valparaiso on the BROADWAY route, Maysville KY on the CARDINAL, and Taylor TX on the INTER-AMERICAN...

NEW YORK'S DOT announced on Sep 1 the awarding of a $198,000 contract to an Amtrak sub-contractor for rehabilitation of the former Lehigh Valley freight station which will become a rail passenger station in Niagara Falls. Work is to be done by Oct 29, when direct passenger service is expected to start.....

AIRLINES WILL GET a massive handout of money from the government for new equipment under terms of a bill passed by the House on Sep 14 (the Senate version is still in committee). The idea is to pay for quieter planes, but it amounts to reimbursing the airlines for up to 25% of the cost of new equipment--up to about $3 billion over a 5-year period, including about $1 billion to foreign airlines. The controversial bill passed narrowly after 8 hours of debate.....

PRESIDENT CARTER NAMED M. Athalie Range to the Amtrak Board of Directors on Sep 13. The Senate must now approve. Ms. Range is president of the Martin Luther King Boulevard Development Corp. in Miami..... AMTRAK'S PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL struck a tractor-trailer combine near Marysville WA southbound on Aug 24 and was delayed 2hrs 45mins. The engineer and fireman were reported injured, but the 180 passengers were unhurt. The lead engine, E unit 465, was believed "totalled" in the wreck. It was running in front of an F40 unit that was having problems. The E unit was used primarily as a steam generator for the train. Another locomotive was brought out to haul the train to Seattle..... THE GREYHOUND BOARD of Directors seems to have gotten the word that President James Kerrigan's policy of blaming Amtrak for its woes is not going to profit the corporation, especially, it seems, after the bus industry's unsuccessful attacks on Amtrak in the recent ICC hearings. Kerrigan was ousted and placed instead in the conglomerate's Armour meat-food division. It is believed that Greyhound will take a new line, favorable to inter-modal cooperation. The head of Trailways has reportedly spoken up in favor of working together with Amtrak.....

THE BROADWAY MUSICAL "On the Twentieth Century" is the subject of an Amtrak promotion in the Northeast. Amtrak hands out flyers inviting the public to take an Amtrak train to the musical (see illustration). Amtrak sells tickets to the performances, and original cast record albums at reduced prices.....

THE ENGINE NOSE of the LRV train will be redesigned to reduce the problem of snow accumulating on the windshield.....

NEW LOWER FARES for fall and winter were announced by Amtrak Aug 23. A special system-wide excursion fare plan effective Sep 6 thru next May 25 cuts roundtrip fares by up to 40%. Trips of at least 250 miles one-way are affected, but travel is restricted in peak holiday periods. The USA Rail Pass has been reduced to these rates: $169 for 14 days, $219 for 21 days, and $259 for 30 days. The Family USA Rail Pass also is reduced. The regular family plan is reduced as well--spouse and children will pay only 50% instead of 75% of full fare, and children aged 2-11 will pay only 25% instead of 37.5% (the head of the household pays full fare)...

NORFOLK AND WESTERN is still being struck by the clerks union, and Amtrak said that operation of the NATIONAL LIMITED has been disrupted some.....

TWO AMTRAK TRACK WORKERS were killed when they were struck by a Metroliner north of the tunnel into Philadelphia's 30th St. Station at 10:15am on Sep 12.....

SEABOARD COAST LINES and Chessie System are talking of a possible merger.....

THE SAN DIEGANS' July patronage was 16% higher than in 1977--82,782 passengers as compared with 71,860..... HIGHWAY TRAFFIC FATALITIES in the U.S. rose over 2% in the first 7 months of 1978. The DOT on Sep 8 announced approval of over $142 million for building only 4.2 miles of interstate highway in Florida.....

AMTRAK HAS PROMISED a new permanent station for St. Louis, Missouri.....

News in this issue is updated thru Sept. 21, 1978.

THE SOUTHBOUND CHAMPION, train 85, was delayed for 2 hours at Bowie, Maryland on Sep 1 when its second GG-1 engine caught fire. Local firemen arrived quickly but refused to put the fire out for nearly 1½ hours, it is reported, until an electric traction employee assured them that the power was off. Once the fire was out, the train continued on, pulled by its lead GG-1, #915. The train, already running 2 hours late, pulled into Washington at 12:30am, 3hrs 50mins late.....

FIRST REBUILT METROLINER cars should reach Amtrak in October. The cars will have Amfleet-style seats, an improved air intake system, and a new electrical system. They are being rebuilt by GE at its Erie PA plant.....

CONCRETE CATENARY POLES will be used instead of steel poles when Amtrak electrifies the New Haven-Boston line..... LINEN TABLE CLOTHS will reportedly be replaced by paper ones on Amtrak trains. The new table cloths, which willbe of "high quality" paper, will replace the linen ones as they wear out. Amtrak believes it will save money by eliminating washing of the cloths, using disposable ones instead.....

BOSTON WILL GET a new Amtrak station, it is reported. The present South Station will be demolished and replaced with a new structure. It will have 11 tracks with high-level platforms. Over the tracks and platforms, which will be depressed into the ground, a bus station and parking garage will be built. The tracks will be depressed sufficiently to permit building a tunnel linking North and South stations in the future. The Boston south subway station will be rebuilt with an entrance into the new Amtrak station. Completion is set for 1982.....

* * *

MBTA FOOTBALL TRAINS are running from Boston to Schaefer Stadium for Patriots games this season. Dates are Sep 3 & 18, Oct 1, 8, 22, 29, and Nov 12 and Dec 10. They leave South Station at 11:15am and return 30mins after the game ends. Of interest to railfans is that they operate on freight-only tracks between Walpole Junction and Foxboro. Round trip fare is $5 ($4.50 if purchased in advance).....

THE "BIG NAME" in government: the New Yorker notes that DOT Secretary Brock Adams has enlarged his signature so that at least eight typewriter spaces are necessary to allow room for it, and a memo to his office staff makes that request. His signature was reproduced on the cover of our First May issue. Incidentally, rumors are circulating in Washington that Adams will be leaving his job soon. One rumor, that he will go to the American Trucking Association, is said to be untrue, as he has promised President Carter that he won't take a position in the transportation industry for 2 or 3 years. Adams really wants the governorship of Washington State, his home. Adams and Carter are said to have conflicts of personality..... RUMORS IN CANADA are that Amtrak's three remaining TurboTrains will go there..... AMTRAK IS SELLING collectors' item timetables. Three timetables printed for Oct 30, 1977 service cutbacks that never occurred because of last-minute appropriation increases, are available to purchasers. They are: NY-Washington (Form 1); Boston-Washington (Form 3); and Philadelphia-Harrisburg (Form 5). They cost 40¢ each, $1 for a set of 3 different, and $8.00 for a package of 25 of any one form. Check should be made payable to Amtrak and sent to: Western Folder Distributing Co., 850 W. Fullerton Ave, Addison IL 60101, making reference to "Oct 30, 1977 Collectors' Timetables". Amtrak has several thousand left.....

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HIGHEST-PAID EXECUTIVE in the railroad industry in 1977 was President John P. Fishwick of the N&W, who received $413,000, reports Modern Railroads.....

CONGRESS' MOVE TO delay any cutbacks in the Amtrak system until the fall of 1979 (see last issue) is only a temporary reprieve, according to a Washington Post analysis (Aug 26). The Post says that Congress is directing the General Accounting Office to study the effects of Amtrak fares on intercity buses, and is authorizing the ICC to hold hearings on the fairness to the bus industry of Amtrak fares. The results might show that Amtrak is diverting people from cars, not buses, as earlier studies have found, but in any event, according to the Post, the "network of trains is likely to shrink in the fall of 1979" with some routes having low financial potential "almost certain to be abandoned ".....

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	APR	MAY	JUN
Metroliners	162,154	162,615	152,705
N.E. Corr. Conventional	361,893	402,500	392,317
New Haven-Springfield	24,802	23,923	22,117
NY-Philadelphia	233,523	195,034	192,271
Phila-Harrisburg	76,353	78,031	72,929
NY-Harrisburg	17,513	18,308	17,848
NY-Buffalo/Detroit	53,545	51,374	50,596
Chicago-St. Louis	16,326	18,458	16,126
Chicago-Milwaukee	20,806	22,525	23,482
Chicago-Detroit	36,161	40,448	40,096
Chicago-Carbondale	11,765	11,064	10,130
Chicago-Quincy	7,158	6,919	5,889
Los Angeles-San Diego	71,500	88,151	95,120
Seattle-Portland	6,029	7,053	6,512
Seattle-Vancouver	5,048	6,092	4,952
Washington-Cincinnati	4,561	5,414	6,005
Washington-Martinsburg	19,662	24,479	23,194
Oakland-Bakersfield	7,262	9,857	8,378
NY-Montreal	8,925	8,636	9,151
Chicago-Port Huron	8,224	9,470	9,808
Chicago-Dubuque	3,382	3,500	4,086
St. Paul-Duluth	5,388	11,721	10,176
Washington-Montreal	29,956	27,502	29,082
NY-Florida	69,932	56,988	59,937
Chicago-NY/Washington	16,006	18,389	20,218
Chicago-Cincinnati-Wash	9,688	10,438	12,175
Kansas City-NY/Washington	14,246	17,136	17,966
Chicago-Seattle (north)	11,281	13,408	19,644
Chicago-Seattle (south)	14,634	14,704	20,122
Chicago-San Francisco	17,886	20,973	22,268
Chicago-Los Angeles	18,262	22,549	26,408
Chicago-Houston	21,917	25,830	22,792
Chicago-New Orleans	16,174	15,566	17,526
Chicago-Florida	9,875	10,286	11,853
Chicago-Laredo	11,117	13,913	14,150
Los Angeles-New Orleans	7,432	8,147	9,502
Los Angeles-Seattle	30,213	34,849	41,257
Chicago-NY/Boston	21,500	23,205	24,342
Boston-Newport News	51,076	52,473	48,034
NY-Savannah	32,201	34,594	36,768
Seattle-Salt Lake City	11,161	14,607	12,187
Boston-Tri-State	4,321	6,000	5,681
Special Trains	2,966	4,100	4,940

Here are Amtrak's most recently released ridership figures, for the months of April, May and June of 1978. See the First May issue of RTN (issue 173) for earlier ridership data. Overall April ridership was down 1.8% from April of 1977 (note that Easter fell in April this year, but in March last year). The May systemwide ridership was down 1.1% from May 1977, and the June figure was down 5.9% from June of 1977. For the fiscal year to date, Oct-Jun, Amtrak systemwide ridership was down 1.3% from the corresponding year-earlier period. For that fiscal year period N.E. Corridor ridership was down 2.1%, short distance routes were up 1.9%, and long distance trains were down 1.1%. RTN believes that much of this ridership loss can be attributed to the "negative advertising" atmosphere created by the announcement of the proposed Amtrak cutbacks by the DOT in early May, and by the fact noted by the Wall Street Journal that more people took motoring vacations this year than had been forecast, with the feeling that they wanted a "last fling" with their vehicles before gasoline prices and/or scarcity became too great.

Systemwide ridership totals: Apr: 1,659,824; May: 1,664,729; Jun: 1,570,240

THE "FORMIDABLE" RAIL SUPPORTER?

In one of those major statements that appear occasionally in the media, especially in times of heavy debate over Amtrak, James C. Miller's article on the op-ed page of the Wall Street Journal (Aug 25) hits hard at Amtrak and no doubt had an impact on many who are unarmed with answers from the other side of the issue.

Miller is identified as codirector of the Center for the Study of Government Regulation at the American Enterprise Institute. His blurb was entitled "What's to be done about Amtrak?". One of the amusing aspects of this otherwise mostly-erroneous attack was his labelling of the "rail passenger lobby" as "formidable". It's doubtful that the many individual rail supporters who went on their own time and expense and effort to plead at the recent ICC hearings, for example, to let us keep our trains, feels himself part of a formidable pressure group. All in all, the attackers of Amtrak lost the recent battle of the ICC hearings, and perhaps Mr. Miller in frustration is driven to grossly over-estimating the power of those lobbying for train service.

Miller tries to refute the main reasons advanced for continuing rail service--energy conservation, environmental protection, safety, servicing isolated areas, the unbalanced transportation budget, and--"the only real justification for Amtrak ...that people are apparently willing to pay something just to have rail service around, even tho they seldom, if ever, use it."

Amtrak Public Relations VP Ed Edel within three days had sent off a refutation to the Journal's Editorial Page Editor, Robert L. Bartley. Edel pointed to "misuse of data" that is "appalling and should not go unchallenged." Examples were the statement that "Airlines and buses pay their own way thru user fees."

Concluded Edel, "What I've seen and experienced ever since Day One of Amtrak just doesn't jibe one iota with Mr. Miller's conclusions. From my reading of the public pulse and the hard data, Americans want a good intercity passenger train service. But it wants a better service than it's getting now--one that's on time and more frequent, equipment that works, one that has clean trains and stations, courteous employees and is reasonably priced. More and better train service, not less, is the route every industrialized country in the world is taking, including Russia. Their decisions are made on economic, energy and social foundations. Why can't Mr. Miller and others concerned with national transportation policy take a broader and more sophisticated look at all our national transportation ills? Don't just analyze one mode in isolation using shaky data. Maybe then the nation can better answer the hard questions not only regarding Amtrak but also those dealing with airline capital needs, highway potholes, energy, urban transit and all the rest."

The Wall Street Journal didn't, to our knowledge, publish Mr. Edel's letter. But it did publish two excellent letters on Sep 11--one from Jason Sumner of Boston University's Economics Department and one from RTN reader Foster Gunnison Jr. of Hartford CT.

Mr. Sumner's letter is too lengthy too reprint here, but it is so full of excellently-marshalled facts and statistics that the serious student of rail travel should look it up. One interesting fact he points out is that Amtrak paid $81.5

million in property taxes in fiscal 1977. "Was any other mode required to pay property taxes last year? Of course not."

Mr. Gunnison's letter states in part: "He judges Amtrak in its present circumstances and relegates all else to nostalgia, and that is a tragic mistake. He ignores that we once had a great rail system in this country--one that was indeed low cost and comfortable and ran everywhere; one that served its public very well until it was destroyed by subsidized competition, discriminatory taxation and unreasonable union work rules supported by labor laws." (See also QUOTES, p. 9.)

Perhaps the thing that's formidable about rail supporters is the strength of the arguments they bring to bear on this issue.

EDITORIAL
THE PRESENT STATE OF AMTRAK

It is our judgment, after talking with Amtrak people, that things are moving in the right direction at Amtrak since Alan Boyd has taken over as president.

Elsewhere we have mentioned the business of personnel changes upcoming. Another important fact is that Amtrak is beginning at long last to move on the question of union work rules. On Sep 14 Conrail achieved a labor breakthru with a new agreement that allows the cutting in size of all its freight crews. The agreement with the United Transportation Union will allow Conrail to save a lot of money in the years ahead. Amtrak seems to be looking at this as a precedent-setting event that could lead to savings in the passenger field also. Amtrak has just recently come to realize that it must take the initiative with the rail unions in effecting such changes. Previously it thought that it was up to the railroads to do this for Amtrak, and of course they have little incentive to do so. While former labor leader Charles Luna is still on the Amtrak Board of Directors it would be a fruitful time to work on this matter of crew costs.

CALTRANS HEARINGS ON THE AMTRAK MAP

The California Dept. of Transportation has just issued a summary of the public hearings it held on the DOT Amtrak cutback proposal. The hearings were in Los Angeles Jul 15, San Francisco Jul 22, and Sacramento Jul 28.

Caltrans said that only a "very small number" of people spoke in favor of reductions in Amtrak. They were mostly in Los Angeles and were those who had worked for tax-cutting Proposition 13. There was a consensus that the DOT's Scenario E was best in its effects upon California.

Northern California respondents strongly supported re-routing the COAST STARLIGHT via Sacramento, Marysville and Chico. There was almost unanimous agreement that the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR be retained. Caltrans recommended that the SFZ be routed on the former Overland Route via SP and UP with the Chicago connection via C&NW or Milwaukee Road. It supported a routing identical to the former UP "City of Everywhere" operation, that would save 1000 train miles daily. Caltrans said it is "unalterably opposed" to combining the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR and the SOUTHWEST LIMITED.

There was opposition to re-routing the San Francisco-Chicago service via the SAN JOAQUIN's route. There were several proposals for re-routing or re-scheduling the SAN JOAQUIN, but not too much agreement on them. Reduction in SAN DIEGAN service was not supported. Caltrans felt the train should be extended to Los Angeles, not to Barstow.

A Los Angeles-Salt Lake City train, as in Scenario E, would be part of the "City of Everywhere" operation favored by Caltrans. Daily service on the SUNSET LIMITED drew support.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct 1: Portland ME - Island Pond VT RT. Fall foliage, White Mts. via Gorham, Berlin, Stark, Groveton; 1-hr stop in Stark NH. Open baggage, snack bar. $29 & $20. Ron Johnson, 470 RR Club, PO Box 2468, South Portland ME 04106. No liquor or pets.

Oct 14-15: 670-mile steam excursion Montreal-Toronto RT, CN 6060. First steam run entirely on this main line in many years. Overnight Lord Simcoe Hotel. Railfan amenities. St. Lawrence Valley Rwy Soc., PO Box 400, Cote des Neiges, Mont. H3S 2S7

Sep 30: Montreal - Island Pond VT - Groveton NH - Gorham NH RT, Green Mts, White Mts, fall foliage; visit Stark & Gorham; 400 mis on Grand Trunk; photostops, etc. $29.90 & $14.90. St. Lawrence Valley Rwy Society, Montreal (address above).

Chessie Steam Special excursions from Richmond VA area on Oct 2, 7, 8, 14, 15. Different tour each weekend, with engine 2101. Info from NRHS Old Dominion Chap., PO Box 8583, Richmond VA 23226. Phone 804-272-2407 7-9pm.

Sep 24: "Little Trains & the Wine Country". Bus trip to Napa County from SF area; visit Calistoga Steam RR, Sonoma, Gaslight & Western RR, Krug & Robert Mondavi wineries. $24. NRHS, PO Box 8407, San Jose CA 95155. 415-931-1798 evenings.

Oct 14: Berkshire Express, Boston-Pittsfield/Chatham-Boston RT, fall foliage in Berkshire Hills. Amfleet train, railfan amenities, food service. $34.95 & $22.95. Mass. Bay Railroad Enthusiasts Inc., Box 136, Ward Hill MA 01830.

One Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: Rail Travel News, Fantrips Dept., PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

CARS & CONSISTS

*CARDINAL, train 50, Washington Aug 28: engine 292 (F40PHR); cars 1366, 1373, 2990 "Pine Peak", Amdinette 20222, 21872, 21853.

*SUPER CONTINENTAL, VIA train 4, Jasper Sep 5: engines 6510 (A), 6607 (B), 6501 (A) (F7's); cars 9656 bag, 5537, 5576, 5618, 5653 coaches, diner lounge 762, Dayniters 5700, 5703, slprs "Ernestown", "Entwistle", "Greenwood", dome lounge "Qu'Appelle", diner 1366, slprs "Erickson", "Emerson", "Ellerslie", "Riviere Raquette", "Invermay", (private cars: slpr "Shenandoah", parlor-slpr "Virginia Beach", business car "Pennsylvania 120").

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Sep 9: engines 523, 534, 521 (SDP's); cars 1241 (to K.C.), 1249, 9993, 9907, 9925, 9963, 9975, 9980, 9929, 2254 "Star Scene", 2754 "Palm Loch", 2621 "Pacific Northwest", 2365 "Regal Hill", (Findlay Fun Time Tours cars: slpr "Julia H. Redfield", obs "Elihu C. Redfield", slpr "Stones River"). Same, Sep 8: engines 514, 507, 539 (SDP's); cars 1106, 9995, 9926, 9962, 9942, 9974, 9981, 9921, 2220 "Indian Squaw", 2751 "Palm Dome", 2759 "Palm Summit", 1272 (to K.C.), deadheads 21149, & 21140 to K.C., AMTECH track inspection cars 10002 & 10001 on at K.C.

*NATIONAL LIMITED, train 31, Kansas City Sep 6: engines 449 (E8A), 264 (F40PHR); cars 1261, 1239 (deadheads: 21267, 21268, 21265), 21857, 21812, 21821, 20209.

*SOUTHERN CRESCENT, SR train 1, Atlanta Aug 29: engines 6905, 6906, 6911 (sublettered for Alabama Great Southern), 6900 (E8's); cars 711, 2301 "Royal Court", 823, 846, Atk 5426, Atk 5658, 2381 "Catawba River", Atk 2622 "Pacific Ocean", 3869, 2352 "Crescent Shores", 821, 3789, 2008 "Pacolet River".

EXPRESS ADS

RTN READERS: SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDLY ADVERTISERS! Courteous, competent help in securing the best available accommodations on Amtrak, CN, CP, Princess Patricia, etc. Write GREAT WESTERN TOURS, 639 Market St., Suite 900, San Francisco 94105, or call us at (415) 398-2994. Pay by check or credit card--we make it easy!

TIMETABLES - Public & Employee New list monthly. SSAE for latest list. Compendium of AMTRAK timetables, 50¢. CARL LOUCKS, 199 Wayland, Hamden CT 06518.

HELP SAVE CANADA'S PASSENGER TRAINS. Join TRANSPORT 2000 Canada: - for regional associations, quarterly bulletins, briefs, all for $5 annually. Send your fee to Membership Services, Transport 2000, Box/C.P. 300, Term. A, Ottawa, K1N8V3, Ont.

DINING CAR DISHES, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports from 30 railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, Kan. 67213. Will buy items.

Oct. 8-9: Foliage Express, special two-day Amtrak fall foliage train, Boston MA - Saratoga Springs NY. Photo runbys, state line tunnel, D&H shop tour. Mystic Valley Rwy Society, Box 32, Mattapan MA 02126; (617) 361-4445 (24-hour service).

STEAM AT ITS BEST! Steam Records: "Extra 1235 East", the finest N&W steam, 12" LP $6.50; "Steam in the Snow" 15 different CP Locos in Action, 12" LP $6.50; "CN Northern Sunset" 4-8-4's 6153, 6167, & 4-6-2 5107 in Excursion Service 1960, 6" LP $2.25, Postpaid (US Funds). Henry Butz, 543 Beverly Rd, Teaneck NJ 07666.

STREET-CAR NOSTALGIA: "Trolley Trails Through the West": Vol. 1 - Yakima; Vol. 2 - Seattle; Vol. 3 - Portland; Vol. 4 - Tacoma, Spokane, Bellingham, etc. $3.00 each, postpaid, moneyback guarantee. Wilson Bros. Publications, Dept. RTN, P. O. Box 712, Yakima WA 98907.

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KEEP INFORMED. You need to read The Fast Mail to get a grasp on all the news that happens in today's railroad scene. We also give you the reasons behind the news so you can make intelligent predictions about tomorrow. Along with this, we have interesting feature articles as well. $5.00/year (12 issues). Unirail, Dept. R, PO Box A3258, Chicago IL 60690.

BUMPER STICKER "Railroaders Have Bigger Pistons" $2.50. Zephyr Pyramid Enterprises Box 5 El Segundo CA 90245 (Calif residents add 6% tax).

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads $1.25 per square inch. Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN'S PUBLICATION SCHEDULE:

At the suggestion of several readers, with this issue we are adopting the practice of showing only the issue number and not the issue date on RTN's cover. We will follow this practice at least for the remainder of 1978. Since our schedule has obviously been less frequent than usual in the past few months, maintaining a flow of cover dates that do not reflect the actual publication time is confusing. The actual publication date is given elsewhere in each issue, usually at the end of the Mixed Train of Thoughts section. The cover is prepared in advance of publication, before the actual date is known for certain.

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